



Mark 14:43-72
Rejected By All

Summary: The mistreatment of Jesus proves how broken we are and how gracious He is.

I don't have a compelling introduction to draw you in this morning but I can promise there will be tears by the time we're done – in the text, if not in here. We're looking at the last night of Jesus' life and we'll focus our attention on three main points: What Jesus endures, what Peter learns, and how Jesus responds.

We pick up where we left off last week – Jesus and the disciples celebrated the Passover meal during which Jesus told them He is the lamb that will be sacrificed for the sins of the world. He transformed the Passover meal into what we call communion today – saying this bread is My body and this wine is My blood. Just as the Passover provided salvation to a generation of Jews in Egypt, communion now symbolizes the salvation we receive in Christ.

After that meal, Jesus and the disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane, which wasn't really a garden like we think of – there were no tomatoes and chilis, it was more like the British version of a garden, we might call it a park, just outside of Jerusalem. There Jesus spent time praying about what was going to happen.

He reached out to His friends and up to His Father to find strength. And then, after several hours, He could see the torchlights coming. He knew the hour had come so He told the disciples, who had fallen asleep, to get up.

Mark 14:43 And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

44 Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead *Him* away safely."

45 As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

What Jesus endured

The list of what Jesus endured is going to be long and it starts with betrayal. Judas, one of twelve men chosen by Jesus has betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver. Judas used his knowledge of Jesus' habits and patterns, his inside access to the Messiah's schedule and locations to help the enemy. Now he leads a combination of Temple guards and volunteers sent to find Jesus and arrest Him quietly.

Judas told them, when we get there, I'll kiss Him so you know who He is. Now that wasn't an uncommon form of greeting in these days. Paul later wrote letters encouraging Christians to greet one another with a holy kiss. It was a cultural thing; we use a handshake or fist bump today. But Judas used a kiss.

What's interesting is there are two Greek words for kiss – one is a quick peck, this one is the word used for a lingering, lover's kiss. Judas likely walked up to Jesus, grabbed him by the shoulders, pressed his lips to Jesus's cheek, and held them there for everyone to see, making it obvious – *this is your guy*.

It's where we get our expression, "the kiss of death."

It was the most hurtful betrayal in history – Jesus has *never* done Judas anything but good, given him opportunities, trusted him with responsibilities. Even now, Matthew tells us when Jesus saw Judas approaching, He didn't push him away or pull back Jesus looked at His betrayer and said – "Friend, do what you came to do" (Matt 26:50).

46 Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. 47 And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

You've probably heard of the fight or flight response – when a crisis happens, or when there is conflict, some people run away, others lash out – there's actually a third category which is freeze, some people are so overwhelmed by what's happened they don't do anything, they freeze up.

Well, here we see the fight response kick in for at least one of the disciples. John tells us it was Peter, which isn't surprising if you know much about these men. Peter has a reputation for being action-oriented, competitive, and impulsive. So, he pulls out his sword and takes a swing.

Immediately though Jesus tells everyone to stop. Luke, the doctor, tells us in his gospel that the man's name was Malchus and Jesus reached out and miraculously healed him. If Jesus hadn't cleaned up the mess, Peter could have been arrested as well, and we might have had four crosses on Calvary.

48 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? 49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

The word 'robber' here doesn't really convey the right idea to us today. It's more than a thief, it's what we could consider to be a thug – someone who is accustomed to using violence to gain results.

So, here's something else that Jesus endured, misunderstanding. People didn't understand who He was or what He was doing. In all His life, Jesus never started or encourage a fight

and yet they came out to arrest Him with overwhelming force projection as if they were approaching a gang leader, warlord, or mafia boss.

He says, 'I haven't been hiding, you could have arrested Me any time in the Temple, but all of this happening in fulfillment of Scripture.' Scripture like that from [Zechariah 13:7](#) which Jesus quoted earlier – [I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered](#). And that's exactly what happened:

[50 Then they all forsook Him and fled.](#)

[All](#) refers to His disciples of course, His friends, the men He had asked to pray with Him. They fell asleep then. They're gone now. So, what else did Jesus endure? [Abandonment](#). At the time of His greatest need, He's alone. We can endure all kinds of pain, punishment, and difficulty if we've got people we know and trust to grind through it with. It's much, much harder to endure when you feel isolated and alone. And that's exactly what Jesus experienced.

[51 Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, 52 and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.](#)

We mentioned earlier the fight or flight response. Peter's impulse was to fight, this young man's impulse was flight. Most scholars believe it's Mark. Remember, Mark tells us Peter's account of the gospel. And so, after telling us how Peter blew it, he goes ahead and makes an admission of his own failure as well.

It seems that Mark's family lived in Jerusalem. Most likely, the Last Supper was held in their house. It's probable that when Jesus and the other men left in the middle of the night, Mark's curiosity got the best of him so he quickly grabbed a linen cloth, wrapped it around himself and followed them out of the house to see where they were going and what they were up to. He saw more than he anticipated and ran away for his life.

Meanwhile,

[53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes.](#)

Together they form the Sanhedrin, a group of 71 leaders – something like a combined Supreme Court and Senate for Israel. Rome had absolute control over the nation, but the Sanhedrin could determine minor religious issues and civil disputes that didn't need Rome's involvement.

[54 But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.](#)

Now this is interesting – isn't it? Much has often been made of Peter's denial which we'll see unfold. But notice this – Peter could not have denied Jesus if he wasn't there. Yes, Peter left Jesus in the garden, but now he's back and in the most dangerous place he could be – the courtyard of the man whose ear he just cut off.

Maybe we should take a minute to notice and appreciate the courage of Peter. It may be misdirected as we'll see later, but there just might be an underlying boldness and loyalty that we don't always appreciate on display here.

55 Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. 56 For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.

So, we add to our list of what Jesus endured and this time it's conspiracy. The council has put Jesus on trial, but they've predetermined the outcome, they're only seeking a way to legitimize it.

57 Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 58 "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'" 59 But not even then did their testimony agree.

What else did Jesus endure? Confusion - repeated and persistent confusion. People just did not understand what He was saying. They have joined together two totally separate things. Jesus never said He would destroy the temple, and He didn't say anything about it being rebuilt, He just said it *would be* destroyed and it *was*, by the Romans. It has never been rebuilt.

Now, there was a time when Jesus said destroy this temple, and I will rise in three days – but He was refereeing to His body, not the bricks. He was talking about His resurrection from the grave (John 2:19).

Well, with all the confusion it's hard to get people to agree on any charges against Jesus, so the high priest abandons any pretense of being an impartial judge and takes on the role of Prosecuting Attorney himself:

60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?"
61 But He kept silent and answered nothing.

Hundreds of years earlier, the prophet Isaiah described what the Messiah would be like and noted that the time would come when

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He opened not His mouth;
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter;

And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.

Sometimes it's easier to stay silent than to try to explain, especially to people who aren't actually willing to hear.

How many words have you wasted responding to questions that weren't really genuine or offering replies and rebuttals that were never going to be received?

Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

62 Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? 64 You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?"

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

They've finally got the conviction they want, the outcome they maneuvered for. It feels like a win in the moment. So, let's add this to the list of things Jesus endured: injustice.

But notice, the ominous undertone in Jesus' admission. Yes, He claims to be the Son of God and this is what they will crucify Him for – but He also claims that one day these men will stand before God and see Jesus there at the Father's right hand judging them.

65 Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.

And so, Jesus endured physical abuse and belittling. What continues to shock me is that it all happens in the presence of, and with the endorsement of, men who are supposed to represent God. Now, it happens all throughout history – Hindus are guilty, Muslims are guilty, Jews are guilty, Catholics and Protestants are guilty – but when religious leaders resort to brutality as a mechanism for enforcement, you know something has gone terribly, tragically, wrong.

And yet, there's even more for Jesus to endure:

66 Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. 67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth."

68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.

Jesus endured denial. He, who was already alone, had His isolation confirmed.

69 And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is *one* of them." 70 But he denied it again.

And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are *one* of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows *it*."

71 Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"

72 A second time *the* rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

So, we come to the end of the chapter and the beginning of our second point – what Peter learned.

What Peter learned.

You need to know, the man's real name is Simon, not Peter. Peter was a nickname Jesus gave him; it meant Rock. Years ago, early on in Jesus' ministry, Jesus had asked the disciples what people were saying about Him and the men told Him all the answers they had heard floating around. Then Jesus looked at them and said, **but who do you say that I am?** And Simon said, **You are the Christ, the son of the Living God** (Matt 16:16).

Matthew 16:17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

There was a double meaning there – the rock was the confession of Jesus as the Messiah, which is the foundation of the church, but the implication is that Simon is also a rock, a *Petros* in Greek, or Peter in English. He was going to be a foundational leader in the church.

Only now the rock has shattered and failed. Struck by an unseen hammer it has cracked into smaller chunks of gravel. It couldn't withstand the pressure.

Luke tells us Jesus actually looked at Peter when the rooster crowed, made eye contact with him from across the room (Lk 22:61). And when He did, something in Peter broke. He wept, and it wasn't like a little moisture in the corner of His eye or single tear slowly rolling down His cheek. No, there are ways for Mark to say that, but he didn't. Mark used the word for a big, ugly, convulsive cry.

Why? What's happened? Here's a man who just a short while ago was lunging at another man with a sword. Here's a man who has crept into the headquarters of the people who want to see Jesus put to death. Here's a man who has never been afraid to take on the world. And now he's crying – what happened? Something finally clicked for Peter. He learned something he would never forget. He learned he couldn't do it all by himself.

Peter was strong, capable, and successful – as a result, things usually went his way - he was impulsive and quick to speak because he was used to winning and being right. Peter was like many of us here in DC - competent and confident. He believed in himself and his ability to get things done or find a way. That kind of attitude and ability will carry you far, until it won't.

It can actually be a terrible spiritual handicap, because if you have plenty of strength and success on your own, you don't learn to rely on God. You don't learn to invite Him in. You don't cry out to Him desperately for help. And as a result, you don't see as many miracles or experience as much of the Spirit because *you're doing alright on your own*.

You're more likely to make Jesus a *part* of your life than the *foundation* of your life.

Consider what we've seen of Peter during the last 24 hours:

- He argues with Jesus over his loyalty
- He falls asleep when Jesus asks him to pray
- He tries to kill a man in Jesus' name and defense
- He leaves Jesus to be arrested
- He denies knowing the man he once said was the Messiah

Now let me ask a question: does any of this look like Jesus? Can you see anything of Jesus as you look at Peter?

No. What do you see? Simon, the man. The man who has always gotten by on his own strength, his own skill, his own instinct and decision-making. The man who has not yet learned how to fully depend on God.

Peter had a record of doing the wrong thing, the wrong way, at the wrong time with the wrong motive. Peter talked when he should he have listened, argued when he should obey, slept when he should pray, and fought when he should submit *because he tried to do things his own way*.

Now he comes to the end of himself. He realizes he can't do it. He realizes he's failing.

I wonder, have you been there? Are you there? Have you been broken? Have you ever wept over your sin? Have you ever wept over your weakness? Have you ever wept over your failure and seen how much you need Jesus?

My friends, we all *need* that moment. We *have to* come to the end of ourselves. We have to come to the place where we don't just hear the claims of Jesus, or the Church, or our parents, or the pastor and think, OK, I can do that – I'm on board, and then we grit it out and try to live life a pretty moral life and maybe cut a little corner here or there. Friends, that doesn't work, we have to come to the honest-to-goodness end of ourselves.

For me, it was June of 1997 at Calvary Chapel Oceanside. Church was not a regular part of my life at that point, but I walked in and God showed up during worship and He broke me. He said, "You're living for yourself. You know it's wrong. You need to live for Me." And I agreed. But He kept pressing that truth in deeper and deeper until eventually I became a sobbing mess sitting next to my date – a girl I had brought to church – which, itself, seemed like a good thing right? *I* was trying to do a good thing, I brought her to church, not the club. And yet, almost like Peter what experienced, God looked at me, and I wept.

I don't remember what song they were singing. The pastor hadn't started preaching. All I remember about that morning is: God showed up, showed me how much I needed Him, and my life has been changing ever since.

Along the way, there have been more of those moments. Seasons of growth where you realize, I'm up against a wall and it's covered in oil. I can't get over it on my own. I've tried everything and nothing works. God, I need You. I can't do this without You, even if I'm trying to do it for You.

My friends, have you had a moment like this? Have you been brought to the end of yourself and your strength and your accomplishments and all the things you think you're going to do? Even the things you said you're going to do for God?

Have you come to the place where trying harder isn't going to fix it? Talking to a friend isn't going to fix it. Another shot or glass, or bottle isn't going to fix it. Another binge on snacks or ice cream or Netflix isn't going to fix it. Another peek at porn isn't going to fix it. Have you snapped? Are you done? Have you felt, in the very depths of your soul the words of the song we sing, "Oh come to the altar?"

Are you hurting and broken within?
Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin?
Jesus is calling.
Oh come to the altar,
The Father's arms are open wide
Forgiveness was bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Let me speak for a moment about point number three.

How Jesus responds.

Notice how Jesus responds to everything that is happening, including Peter's denial. Jesus is calm, anchored, stabilized, in absolute control. There is no evident anger. No malice. No retaliation. No freaking out. And, as events unfold, He will continue to evidence mercy and grace. As they put Him to death He will pray, [Father, forgive them, they don't understand what they're doing.](#)

When He rises from the grave, He'll call them all back together. He'll restore Peter three times, once for every time he denied. He'll give Thomas evidence for his doubts. He will put each one of the disciples back into leadership positions and use them to build the early church.

My friends, Jesus came to help us, to heal us, to cure us. He endured all of this mistreatment to help us see how much we need Him. Do you see it yet?

Have you learned like Peter? Are you ready to be rebuilt by God instead of by your strength? Is your rooster crowing this morning? Have you ever wept over your sin and your need for Jesus?

Are you ready to renounce self-confidence and cultivate divine-dependence?

Others will let you down. Will you forgive them and restore them? Even if they deny you?

If so, turn to Jesus. Confess your sins. Confess your weakness. Ask for forgiveness and strength. Tell Him, my life is Yours – make it look that way Jesus, make it look that way.

Let's pray.



Sermon Application and Discussion Questions

Mark 14:43-72 Rejected By All

Summary: The mistreatment of Jesus proves how broken we are and how gracious He is.

- Of all the things that Jesus endured, what would be (or is) the hardest for you?
 - Betrayal
 - Being misunderstood
 - Abandonment
 - Conspiracy
 - Confusion
 - Physical Abuse
 - Belittling
 - Denial
- What are some of the reasons why we deny Jesus?
 - Review Romans 1:16-17. What do you learn?
- The leaders in Jerusalem have a hard time accepting Jesus for who He is. How difficult was it for you to accept Jesus?
- How is the warning of 1 Cor 10:12 fitting for the disciples who just hours ago said they would do anything for Jesus?
- Do you think Peter was being cowardly or courageous at the high priest's house? What do you think he was telling Himself?
- Have you ever wept over your sin, weakness, and brokenness? When? Why? What have you learned from it?
- Read 2 Cor 12:9-10 – what do you learn about the intersection of God's strength and our weakness?
- Read John 21:1-19. Why does Jesus ask Peter a question three times? Why is this important?
 - Why is it important to know that all of these men, except Judas, later became leaders in the church?
 - Others will let you down, will you forgive them and restore them? Even if they deny you?